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SIX CHARGED IN DRUG RING INDICTMENT

Mac Cauley, United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida, announced today the unsealing of a thirty-three count Indictment charging six individuals with various federal cocaine and cocaine base violations. According to the Indictment, the defendants operated a cocaine and cocaine base distribution network in Bradford County, from 1993 to April 2001. The following individuals were charged with conspiracy to distribute cocaine and cocaine base, commonly known as "crack":

1. Vera Aaron, a/k/a Ms. Cartel, a/k/a Mrs. Cartel, age 47, a resident of Starke, Florida;
2. Barbara Aaron, a/k/a Barbara Aaron Bennett, age 36, a resident of Starke, Florida;
3. Morris Aaron, a/k/a Gator, age 50, a resident of Starke, Florida;
4. Troy Aaron, age 30, a resident of Starke, Florida;
5. Tashema Aaron, a/k/a Tina, age 23, a resident of Starke, Florida; and
6. Cedrick Baker, age 27, a resident of Starke, Florida.

The Indictment also charges Vera Aaron with seven counts of distribution of crack cocaine and one count of distribution of cocaine. Barbara Aaron is charged with one count of distribution of cocaine. Morris Aaron is charged with fourteen counts of distribution of crack cocaine and two counts of aiding and abetting in the distribution of crack cocaine. Troy Aaron is charged with one count of aiding and abetting in the distribution of crack cocaine and one count of distribution of crack cocaine. Tashema Aaron is charged with one count of distribution of cocaine and one count of distribution of crack cocaine. The Indictment also charges Cedrick Baker with two counts of distribution of crack cocaine and one count of distribution of cocaine.

If convicted of the conspiracy count, the defendants face maximum terms of life imprisonment, minimum terms of ten years imprisonment, and \$4 million in fines, or both. Vera Aaron faces an additional 40 years imprisonment, a five year mandatory minimum sentence and up to \$2 million in fines, or both, if convicted on each of the seven counts of distributing crack cocaine. Vera Aaron also faces an additional 20 years imprisonment and \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted on the one count of distributing cocaine. Barbara Aaron faces an additional 20 years imprisonment and \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted of one count of distributing cocaine. Morris Aaron faces an additional 20 years imprisonment and \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted on each of the fourteen counts of distributing crack cocaine and two counts of aiding and abetting the distribution of crack cocaine. Troy Aaron faces an additional 40 years imprisonment, a five year mandatory minimum sentence and up to \$2 million in fines, or both, if convicted of distributing crack cocaine. Troy Aaron also faces an additional 20 years imprisonment and \$1 million in

finer, or both, if convicted of one count of aiding and abetting the distribution of crack cocaine. Tashema Aaron faces an additional 20 years imprisonment and \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted on each of the two counts of distributing crack cocaine. Cedrick Baker faces an additional 20 years imprisonment, and up to \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted on each of the two counts of distribution of crack cocaine. Cedrick Baker faces an additional 20 years imprisonment, and up to \$1 million in fines, or both, if convicted on one count of distribution of cocaine.

The investigation is the result of the joint efforts of the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Drug Enforcement Administration, Bradford County Sheriff's Office, Baker County Sheriff's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, and the Special Investigations Unit for the State Attorney's Office, 8th Judicial Circuit. The case will be prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Robin Gerstein.

An indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of the federal criminal law and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.